



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. Department of the Interior

Great Sand Dunes
National Park and
Preserve

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Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve News Release

For Immediate Release – August 11, 2016

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Great Sand Dunes Celebrates 100 years of the National Park Service

The National Park Service celebrates a 100 year birthday on August 25, 2016. President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service on August 25, 1916, a new federal bureau in the Department of the Interior responsible for protecting national parks and monuments. This Organic Act established an agency whose mission is to protect, preserve, and provide opportunities for current and future generations

Since the creation of this public land agency, the National Park Service has established over 400 park units that protect seashores, lakes, natural features, cultural history, archeological sites, and battlefields that tell the American story. All National Park Service park units will waive entrance fees starting Thursday, August 25 through Sunday, August 28 in honor of this anniversary.

Great Sand Dunes invites visitors to participate in a series of free events August 25-28 to celebrate this significant occasion. To kick off the Centennial events, Great Sand Dunes will provide cookies and light refreshments at the visitor center on Thursday, August 25 at 2p.m. Author, Michael G. Geary, will provide a public presentation on his new book, *Sea of Sand*, followed by a book signing at the visitor center on Friday, August 26 at 2p.m. His book is the definitive history of the natural, cultural, and political forces that helped shape this unique landscape. Author, Michelle Rodenburg, will be available on Saturday, August 27 between 10a.m. and 12p.m. for a book signing of her children's book, *Colorado Creatures*, an Alphabet book. Michelle is a well-established Colorado author whose books are written to make reading fun as well as educational for children. Both books are available at the Western National Parks Association store in the visitor center, 8:30a.m. to 6p.m.

The weekend of events continues with a concert at the outdoor amphitheater by Colorado-based bluegrass band, Rapidgrass Quintet from 7p.m. – 8:30p.m. The Western National Parks Association will be selling Centennial 2016 and Great Sand Dunes merchandise. Drinks and snacks will be sold by the Mosca Pass Outpost

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

during the concert. Visitors are invited to view night sky objects through multiple telescopes after the concert at the amphitheater.

Thursday, August 25

2p.m. – Great Sand Dunes visitor center - Centennial Kick-off with light refreshments, cookies, and lighting of the Centennial cake.

Ranger Programs will be offered at 1p.m., 3:30p.m., 7p.m., and 8:45p.m. Check the visitor center for locations.

Friday, August 26

2p.m. – Great Sand Dunes visitor center – *Sea of Sand* presentation by Michael G. Geary followed by a book signing.

Ranger Programs will be offered at 1p.m., 3:30p.m., 7p.m., and 8:45p.m. Check the visitor center for locations.

Saturday, August 27

10a.m. – 12p.m. – Great Sand Dunes visitor center - book signing by *Colorado Creatures, an Alphabet book* author, Michelle Rodenburg

7p.m. – 8:30p.m. – Great Sand Dunes outdoor amphitheater – Rapidgrass Quintet bluegrass concert. Telescope viewing after concert.

Ranger Programs will be offered at 1p.m., 3:30p.m., and 8:45p.m. Check the visitor center for locations.

Sunday, August 28

Ranger Programs will be offered at 3:30p.m. and 8:45p.m. Check the visitor center for locations.

Free ranger programs will be offered Thursday through Sunday at the visitor center, dunes parking lot, Montville Nature Trail, or at the outdoor amphitheater. Each interactive program is designed to connect visitors to resources within Great Sand Dunes in hopes of inspiring further discovery and exploration in national park units within the National Park System. Evening programs offered Thursday through Sunday at 8:45p.m. at the outdoor amphitheater will educate visitors on the significance of experiencing darkness and quiet in national parks. Each evening program will conclude with a telescope viewing to enhance the visitors' appreciation of viewing celestial objects in some of the darkest areas of the world, national parks. For more information on ranger programs, a full schedule is available online at www.nps.gov/grsa or by calling the visitor center at 719-378-6395.

For more information on National Park Service Centennial special events at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, visit www.nps.gov/grsa or call the visitor center at 719-378-6395.

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